



MEMORANDUM FOR ALL NOAA EMPLOYEES

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)  
Under Secretary of Commerce for  
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Interim Guidance Regarding Use of non-NOAA Aircraft

On November 19, 2004, I issued a safety stand-down regarding the use of non-NOAA aircraft by NOAA employees. The stand-down imposed restrictions on the use of non-NOAA aircraft, initiated a safety review examining employee use of non-NOAA aircraft, and ordered the development of a new safety program governing the use of non-NOAA aircraft.

Since this stand down, NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations (NMAO), with the assistance of all NOAA line and staff offices, has conducted an exhaustive review of employee use of non-NOAA aircraft. This review has culminated in the development of a new NOAA Administrative Order entitled "NOAA Aviation Safety Policy," which was approved by the NOAA Executive Council on July 1, 2005, and available for review at: <http://www.aviationsafety.noaa.gov>. While approved, full implementation of this Order will not occur until October 1, 2006, as NMAO must still establish several program components set forth in the policy.

Because safety is of paramount concern, NOAA will continue to restrict the use of non-NOAA aircraft by NOAA personnel, until the new Order can be implemented. Accordingly, until further notice, NOAA personnel are only authorized to fly for official business on:

1. NOAA aircraft; or
2. Non-NOAA aircraft that are:
  - A. Secured using the existing "Reimbursable Interagency Agreement between NOAA and the U.S. Department of Interior, National Business Center, Aviation Management, for Aviation Services Procurement;"
  - B. Owned and operated by other departments, agencies or instrumentalities of the United States; by state or local governments; or by the governments of countries



that meet the Federal Aviation Administration International Safety Assessment Program Category I rating; or

- C. Approved by the Director of NMAO, following a risk assessment examining the safety of the proposed flight.

Procedures for requesting approval to use non-NOAA aircraft are posted on the NOAA aviation safety website <http://www.aviationsafety.noaa.gov> .

These restrictions do not apply to:

1. Use of scheduled carriers for point to point transportation;
2. Use of non-NOAA aircraft for the acquisition of products or data, where no NOAA personnel fly on the aircraft in any capacity;
3. Use of non-NOAA aircraft for movement of cargo, where no NOAA personnel fly on the aircraft in any capacity; or
4. Employee use of their privately owned aircraft for transportation purposes, provided use is in accordance with all Federal Travel Regulations and no passengers are on board.

This interim guidance shall remain in effect until the Director, NMAO announces the implementation of the Order establishing NOAA's Aviation Safety Policy.